

**AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
ROOM 803, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA  
THURSDAY, October 22, 2009, 11:00 A.M.**

**Voting Members present:**

Deke Copenhaver, Mayor of Augusta – **Chairman**

Sandra Korbelik (representing Fred Cavanaugh,  
Mayor of Aiken)

Stephen Strohming (representing Ronnie Young,  
Chairman, Aiken County Council)

Ron Cross, Chairman, Columbia Co. Commission –  
**Vice- Chairman**

Skip Grkovic (representing Lark Jones, Mayor, North  
Augusta)

Matthew Fowler (representing Vance Smith, GA  
DOT Commissioner)

**Voting Members absent:**

George James, Mayor of Grovetown

Tom Cobb, Mayor of Blythe

Henry Taylor, SC – 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District  
Commissioner, ½

Charles Dalton, SC – 3<sup>rd</sup> District Highway  
Commissioner, ½

Robert Buchwitz, Chairman Hephzibah  
Commission

C. H. Williams, Mayor of Burnetown

John Curry (representing Col John Holwick –  
Fort Gordon)

**Others Present (N = Nonvoting Member)**

**Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission**

Paul DeCamp

Lynn Russell

Marya Moultrie

Juriah Lewis

**Columbia County**

Glen Bollenger

Matt Schlachter

**City of Augusta**

Sharon Dottery

David Griffith

Hameed Malik

**GA DOT**

Tony Collins

Dave Cox

Reuben Woods

Ulysses Mitchell

George Brewer

Vonda Everett

Cissy McNure

**Aiken County**

Gerald Jefferson

**LSCOG**

Lynnda Bassham

Rich Eberle

- 1. Consider approval of the minutes of the Policy Committee meetings held on September 3, 2009.**

Mr. Grkovic moved to approve the minutes of September 3, 2009. Mr. Cross seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**2. Consider approval of projects in the Columbia County, Georgia portion of the ARTS area funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and amend the FY 2008 - 2011 Transportation Improvement Program and 2030 Long Range Transportation Program to include these projects (attachment). These projects in the amount of \$2,553,067 will replace the intersection improvement projects approved by the Policy Committee on September 3, 2009.**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. Item #2 is attached to the agenda which lists the resurfacing projects. After the last meeting Columbia County determined they could more expeditiously do the resurfacing projects than the intersection improvement projects originally proposed. These are essentially a swap out of projects to be funded under ARRA.

Mr. Cross moved to approve these amendments to the TIP and LRTP. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3. Consider recommending approval of an amendment to the Long Range Transportation Plan consultant contract with Wilbur Smith and Associates to include an additional \$46,258.00 to establish ranking criteria for projects in the South Carolina portion of the study area in order to comply with South Carolina law (ACT 114). Aiken County will pay for this additional work.**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. This is a change order to the current contract with Wilbur Smith and Associates to establish ranking criteria for determining prioritization of projects for the Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Plan.

Mrs. Korbelik explained there is a fundamental flaw with the way the criteria was written on the State level in that it doesn't allow the MPO to add projects to address future transportation problems. Act 114 allows you to make some modifications to the State criteria and ranking system. Now that the Long Range Transportation Plan is being updated, the consultant will look at how other MPOs throughout the state are using the criteria to rank their projects and bring this back to the State so they can rank the projects under the new criteria.

Mr. Cross moved to approve this amendment to the LRTP update contract. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**4. Consider approval of final ARTS FY 2010 - 2013 Transportation Improvement Program.**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. At the September 3rd meeting the draft TIP was approved. A thirty day public review and comment period ended on October 7, 2009. Three public meetings were held - one in each county. Availability of the TIP was advertised on the website and through newspapers, emails and the publication of the newsletter and distribution to agencies throughout the region.

Comments received were general questions about specific projects that are either in pre-construction or under construction. There were some specific comments about accelerating the implementation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan projects and improvements to the Augusta Public Transit System. There were no comments that generated substantial changes to the TIP.

A six-page handout summarizing the final recommended was attached to the agenda. As for the lump sum projects, nothing was changed. The Richmond and Columbia County road project lists are essentially the same as in the draft.

Mr. Grkovic stated the Highway 25 project should be seven lanes instead of five.

The North Belair Road project under Columbia County projects should be deleted. Horizon South Parkway is called Lewiston Road between Interstate 20 and Columbia Road.

Mr. Cross moved to approve the final TIP with the corrections. Mr. Cox seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **5. Present the FY 2008 and FY 2009 Congestion Management Process Reports.**

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. Portable vehicle GPS units, which are set to record travel times at two second intervals, are used to calculate the time it takes to travel each designated route segment. Any elements that are present during the run, such as a school, railroad crossing, or an accident that might significantly slow travel times are noted in the report. This is done to help determine what, if any, solutions may be pursued to alleviate the congestion. Presently, there are 52 routes in the time travel survey.

Each route is run on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in both directions in the morning between 7:15 and 8:30 am and in the evening between 4:30 and 6:00 pm. Runs are typically completed in April or May prior to the end of the school year.

Routes are chosen for analysis based on the results of previous CMP runs. For example, routes that were classified as seriously congested in a previous year, which means travel times are greater than 30% below the posted speed limit, will be re-analyzed every year. Those routes that were classified as borderline congested in a previous year, which means travel times are 15% to 25% below the posted speed limit, are re-analyzed every three years.

| <b>Performance Measures<br/>ARTS Congestion Management Process</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Category</b>  | <b>Average Speed</b>                    |
| Not Presently Congested (NPC)                                      | >= Posted speed limit.                  |
| At Risk of Congestion (ARC)  | 1% - 15% below the posted speed limit   |
| Borderline Congested (BC)  | 15% - 25% below the posted speed limit  |
| Marginally Congested (MC)  | 25% - 30 % below the posted speed limit |

|                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Seriously Congested (SC) | > 30% below the posted speed limit |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|

### ARTS CMP Data Collection Process

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Not Presently Congested (in 3 or more periods) | Every 5 Years |
| At Risk of Congestion (in 3 or more periods)   | Every 4 Years |
| Borderline Congested (in 3 or more periods)    | Every 3 Years |
| Marginally Congested (in 3 or more periods)    | Every 2 Years |
| Seriously Congested (in 2 or more periods)     | Every Year    |

### 2008 CMP Report

In Aiken County six routes were run: Whiskey Road, Richland Avenue, Silver Bluff Road, US1/US78, and Knox Avenue, SC 118. Four routes were determined to be seriously congested in two\* or more periods:

**Whiskey Road** – seriously congested during the southbound and northbound PM run. Corridor improvements and signalization improvements need to be done. Traffic backs up quickly, especially in the afternoon, at the Pine Log Road intersection and the East Gate intersection.

**Silver Bluff Road** – seriously congested at all times. Corridor and intersection improvements need to be done. Currently, there is no dedicated left turn lane going into Town Creek Road. Traffic backs up there as well as at the Woodside Plantation entrance. Traffic also backs up at Woodside Executive Court/Hartwell Drive and Hidden Haven.

**US1/US78** – seriously congested at all times. Corridor improvements need to be done in the wake of the increased economic development along the corridor in recent years. Access management has diminished along this segment, while traffic volume has increased. In addition, the Atomic Road interchange needs to be re-designed for better access.

**Knox Avenue** – seriously congested during the southbound AM run and the northbound PM run. Traffic mainly backs up at 3 signaled intersections: Martintown Rd, Georgia Ave, and the cross street going into the Wal-Mart plaza and Lowe's. In spite of the 5 lane installation done on Knox a few years ago, signalization timing may not be at its optimal setting especially in the PM hours. Wait times at each of these signals are sometimes prolonged.

\* ***Richland Avenue*** – Travel time surveys were conducted at noon only in both directions. It was found to be seriously congested during the westbound noon run. Signalization timings along the corridor may not be at their optimal settings. The major intersection at Laurens Street downtown has traffic coming in from four directions where drivers make left turns with no dedicated left turn signals in place.

**In Columbia County** six routes were run: SR 223, Baston Road, Belair Road, Columbia Road, Flowing Wells Road, Old Evans Road. Five routes were determined to be seriously congested in two or more periods:

***SR 223-*** marginally congested during the westbound AM run and seriously congested at all other times. Eastbound traffic heading to Fort Gordon's Gate #2 entrance is particularly heavy during the AM peak period.

***Boston Road*** – seriously congested during the eastbound AM run and eastbound PM run. Travel time delays were due in part to delays at the major signalized intersections.

***Belair Road*** – seriously congested at all times. Traffic is especially heavy at the intersection of Belair Road and Washington Road, Belair Road and I-20 Interchange and the intersection of Jimmie Dyess Parkway and Gordon Highway.

***Flowing Wells Road*** – seriously congested at all times. School and commuter traffic contribute to congestion during the AM peak period. Heavy traffic volumes at the Columbia Road and Washington Road intersections contribute to congestion during the PM peak period.

***Old Evans Road*** – seriously congested at all times. Heavy traffic volumes, left turn movements and long waits at major signalized intersections are some of the factors contributing to the congestions along the corridor.

**In Richmond County** eleven routes were run: 13<sup>th</sup> Street/RA Dent Boulevard, Fifteenth Street, Greene Street, Jackson Road/Walton Way/Davis Road, Tobacco Road, Walton Way Segment #1, Walton Way Segment #2, Washington Road, Wheeler Road, Wrightsboro Road Segment #2, Wrightsboro Road Segment #1 (Saturday). Four routes were found to be seriously congested in two or more periods.

***13<sup>th</sup> Street/RA Dent Boulevard*** – seriously congested at all times. Heavy traffic volumes, left turn movements, the presence of at-grade railroad crossing and long waits at major signalized intersections are some of the factors contributing to the congestion along the corridor.

***Fifteenth Street*** – seriously congested at all times. Heavy traffic volumes, left turn movements, the presence of an at-grade railroad crossing and long waits at major signalized intersections are some of the factors contributing to the congestions along the corridor.

***Wheeler Road*** – seriously congested during the eastbound AM run and the westbound PM run. The level of congestions reflects the combination of heavy commuter traffic and the presence of many traffic generators along and near this corridor.

***Wrightsboro Road Segment #1 (Saturday)*** – travel time surveys were conducted during Saturday afternoon. This road segment was seriously congested in both directions. High traffic volumes, the presence of Augusta Mall and other commercial establishments and the close proximity of signalized intersections are among the factors contributing to the congestion.

## **2009 CMP Report**

**In Aiken County** nine routes were run: Bettis Academy, Buena Vista Avenue, Dougherty Road, Know Avenue, Pine Log Road, Richland Avenue, Silver Bluff Road, US1/US78, and Whiskey Road. Four routes considered seriously congested during two or more periods.

***Pine Log Road*** – travel time surveys conducted during 3:00-3:15 PM when school is letting out. This road was seriously congested in both directions. Therefore, there are prolonged wait times at nearby intersections where students are crossing streets, and cars are turning at intersections to enter and leave the school grounds. Additionally, the signalization timing at the Whiskey Road intersection and the Silver Bluff intersection may not be at their optimal settings. The wait times there are prolonged.

***Richland Avenue*** – travel time surveys conducted at noon both directions. Road was seriously congested in both directions.

***Silver Bluff Road*** – seriously congested in both directions. Same conditions as 2008.

***Whiskey Road*** – seriously congested during the southbound and northbound PM runs. Same conditions as 2008.

**In Columbia County** nine routes: SR223, Baston Road, Belair Road, Evans-to-Locks Road, Flowing Wells Road, Old Evans Road. Five routes were considered to be seriously congested during two or more periods.

***SR 223*** – seriously congested during all times. Eastbound traffic to Fort Gordon's Gate #2 entrance is particularly heavy during the AM peak period. Other factors contributing to the congestion (i.e. reduced average speed) include the presence of a school zone and frequent left-turn movements.

***Baston Road*** – seriously congested during the westbound and eastbound AM runs and the westbound PM run. Travel time delays are due in part to delays at the major signalized intersections and the presence of a school zone.

***Belair Road*** – seriously congested during the southbound AM run and the southbound and northbound PM runs. Heavy traffic volumes and the presence of many commercial establishments, especially at major intersections and the I-20 exchange are a couple of factors contributing to the congestion.

***Flowing Wells Road*** – seriously congested at all times. School and commuter traffic contribute to congestion during the AM peak period. Heavy traffic volumes at the Columbia Road and Washington Road intersections contribute to congestion during the PM peak period.

***Old Evans Road*** – seriously congested at all times. Heavy traffic volumes, left turn movements, long waits at major signalized intersections and the presence of school zones are some of the factors contributing to the congestion.

**In Richmond County** four routes: 13<sup>th</sup>/ RA Dent Boulevard, Fifteenth Street, Wrightsboro Road Segment #3, Wrightsboro Road Segment #1(Saturday). Three routes were considered to be seriously congested in two or more periods.

***13<sup>th</sup>/RA Dent Boulevard*** – seriously congested during the southbound AM and southbound and northbound PM runs. The corridor was considered seriously congested at all times in 2008. Heavy traffic volumes, left turn movements, the presence of an at-grade railroad crossing and long waits at major signalized intersections are some of the factors contributing to the congestion along the corridor.

***Wrightsboro Road Segment #3-*** seriously congested during the westbound AM and westbound and eastbound PM runs. The fact that this segment of Wrightsboro Road has only one travel lane in each direction, serves as a commuter route and the presence of Trinity Hospital and related professional offices are some of the factors contributing to congestion. A school zone is also located along this segment.

***Wrightsboro Road Segment #1(Saturday)*** – seriously congested at all times. Travel times were completed during the afternoon on Saturday. High traffic volumes, the presence of Augusta Mall and other commercial establishments and the close proximity of signalized intersections are among the factors contributing to the congestion.

## **6. Status of Projects:**

### **(a) Georgia Highways**

Mrs. Everett introduced Tony Collins and Reuben Woods. Mr. Woods will be taking over for Dave Cox who will become the GDOT planning representative for the Columbus MPO. Mrs. Everett presented this item. There are no major changes since the last update. Projects scheduled to be let in the next three months include:

- Alexander Drive Widening (ARRA Funded)
- CR 1509 Keysville Road resurfacing (ARRA funded)

Project updates include:

- William Few Parkway Extension – The FONSI and CLOMR are being resolved
- Flowing Wells Road Widening – The work on this project has stopped due to funding issues.

- Old Petersburg / Old Evans Road Widening – Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed. 202 out of 284 parcels have been acquired.
- Wrightsboro Road Widening - Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed. Plans are 80% complete.
- I-520 from Gordon Highway to US 1 (Deans Bridge Road) – Right-of-way plans are under review.
- SR 28 widening - preliminary plans are underway.
- SR 56 widening - environmental is underway.

**(b) South Carolina Highways**

Mrs. Korbek and Mr. Grkovic presented this item as sent to her by Kevin Gantt of SCDOT.

- Whiskey Rd has been submitted and reviewed by QA/QC. This ARRA funded project is on schedule for March 2010 letting.
- Silver Bluff Public Information Meeting (held on September 24, 2009) Comments have been reviewed and we are reviewing the overwhelming requests for a light at the intersection of Town Creek Road and Silver Bluff Road. Additional comments to be reviewed with the ARTS Committee.
- East Buena Vista and Atomic Rd will be reviewed in the field with the City of North Augusta when date is confirmed.
- Walnut Lane and US 25 will be pushed forward now that ARRA funded projects have been submitted for review.

**(c) Augusta Public Transit**

Ms. Dottery presented this item. Mr. Johnson is out on medical leave. The proposed projects to be funded under ARRA have been presented to the Public Services Committee and will go to the full Augusta Commission on November 5, 2009. APT is still forging ahead with plans to move the maintenance division, and possibly the APT administrative offices, to property on Mike Padgett Highway (SR 56). The Augusta Commission has requested cutting \$1.8 million from the department's budget. Ridership is steady at 2,300 per day.

The ad campaign is still ongoing on the buses. Tony Thomas of APT is aggressively working on this program. Paine College has recently contacted him, as well as other businesses.

Lamar Advertising owns 80% of the bus shelters and they are required to keep the shelters maintained and cleaned. When a complaint is received, APT will send out personnel to clean the shelters.

**(d) Aiken County Transit**

Mrs. Bassham presented this item. Due to the economy, the Aiken County Council reduced the Best Friend's Express operating funds by \$50,000. Federal transit funds cannot be used for operating costs, so the most painless way to reduce service is being sought. Public meetings were held in September. Saturday service will have to be eliminated and additional cuts will be evaluated. Compelling stories have been heard from riders that use the transit system to go to work, complete their education, and go to medical appointments on Saturdays. This service means a lot to people. This has stirred up some interest from the media. There were no negative comments regarding fare increases.



Richard Eberle has joined the LSCOG staff as Transit Projects Manager. He is working directly on the implementation of the Mobility Services for All Americans grant (MSAA). LSCOG is one of three chosen nationwide by the US DOT to develop and implement a one-call center coordinated public transit network for the six-county region. Someone looking for a way to use public transit will be able to contact the center and be connected with available transit services throughout the service area. Updated routing, scheduling and dispatch software will enable transit providers to coordinate services. Grant funds also will pay for the installation of automatic vehicle locators and data terminals on all transit vehicles. The MSAA initiative will help determine where the vehicles are, what the ridership really is and bring the transit system out there to the people who need it the most. This will be up and running by March 2010.

**7. Update on Special Studies Projects:**

**(a) APT Transit Development Plan**

Mr. Lewis presented this item. The completed 191-page Transit Development Plan indicates that a permanent funding source needs to be identified for transit and not to look at transit as a dependent. In completing the study, consultants at Wilbur Smith & Associates took the economic development approach. The study recommends eliminating two routes and adding an express bus route and a cross-town bus route. The Augusta Commission requested they study a transit corridor in the Gordon Highway area that was not identified in the study. A limited number of hard copies of the final report will be available. The executive summary and complete study will be posted on the MPO website.

**(b) City of Aiken**

Mrs. Korbelik presented this item. Aiken is about to sign the contract with Wilbur Smith and Associates to prepare the north side transportation study. The project will take six months to complete. A request for proposal will be issued early next year for a special study of Dougherty Road.

**8. Update on Air Quality Initiatives**

**(a) Aiken County**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Early October, North Augusta and SCDHEC held a meeting with potential stakeholders to talk about a proposed park & ride facility that would be built at the NW quadrant of exit 5 off I-20. The site would accommodate up to 200 vehicles. A park and ride facility would facilitate carpooling and thereby reduce vehicle emissions. This project would also look good in the eyes of the EPA because it would show them that ARTS/Aiken County is taking proactive measures to improve air quality.

**(b) Richmond County**

Ms. Moultrie presented this item. On September 16, 2009 the US EPA announced it would reconsider the 2008 national ambient air quality standards for ground level ozone, the primary component of smog.

EPA will reconsider the ozone standards to ensure that two of the nation's most important air quality standards are clearly grounded in science, protect public health and the environment.

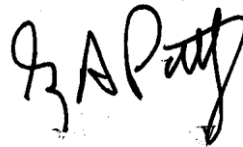
The Agency will propose any needed revisions to the ozone standards by December 2009 and issue a final decision by August 2010. EPA will work with states to accelerate the implementation of new standards. This will limit any delays associated with moving to any new standards. Final air quality designations will be announced by August 2011.

Ms. Moultrie also announced that she was currently working on an Air Quality Action Plan report that will be submitted to the Georgia EPD. This report is being compiled to show the Georgia EPD that the ARTS stakeholders are being proactive about improving air quality.

## **9. Issues and Concerns**

Mr. DeCamp introduced Reuben Woods and Ulysses Mitchell. They will be taking over for Radney Simpson and Dave Cox who will be moving over to the Columbus area.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. A. Patty".

George A. Patty  
Project Director